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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/620,831	07/16/2003	Darren Eby	ASC01 P-104A	1261
28101	7590	03/25/2005	EXAMINER	
VAN DYKE, GARDNER, LINN AND BURKHART, LLP			BRYANT, DAVID P	
2851 CHARLEVOIX DRIVE, S.E.				
P.O. BOX 888695			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49588-8695			3726	
DATE MAILED: 03/25/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/620,831	EBY, DARREN	
	Examiner David P. Bryant	Art Unit 3726	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 January 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-4 and 11-17 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 5-10 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 122903 & 010204.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election of Group II (claims 5-10) in the reply filed on January 6, 2005, is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claims 1-4 and 11-17 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Interference

It is noted that applicant has attempted to provoke an interference with allowed application 10/283,533. Once the present application includes an allowable claim, the two applications will be considered for a possible interference.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to because of the following:

(1) In Figure 3, the U-shaped receiving portion on the left side (rather than the right side) should be labeled with the reference character 22b, in accordance with Figure 1 and the specification on page 3, lines 26-30.

(2) Also in Figure 3, a floor portion for the bracket should apparently be depicted at a position below receiving portion **22a** and above mounting holes **28**. Without this floor portion, the pivot pin **18** would not be mounted to the bracket in any way.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

Page 3:

In lines 31-34, it is disclosed how the pivot pin is mounted to the bracket. However, there

is no disclosure or any showing of a bracket structure for retaining the pivot pin 18, nor any structure that would provide the disclosed biasing force against the spring 26.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the LEND-A-HAND Installation Instructions (LAH) in view of Pleiss (U.S. Patent No. 1,796,344).

Claim 5: LAH teaches a method for installing a foldaway hand rail to a surface of a vehicle by temporarily assembling a hand rail to upper and lower brackets (step 1), marking/drilling holes for the upper and lower brackets and mounting the brackets to the surface of the vehicle (step 2), and attaching the hand rail to the brackets (step 3).

LAH fails to teach assembling the hand rail to the brackets such that the hand rail is selectively positionable in first and second positions, and mounting the brackets to the vehicle after the hand rail is so attached.

Pleiss teaches a rack having a plurality of rails 4 and a bracket 1. As disclosed on page 1, lines 46-52, the rails are assembled within the bracket such that the rails are selectively positionable in at least first and second positions (see Figures 2 and 3). The assembled rack is

then mounted to a surface by passing screws through mounting apertures formed in laterally extending ears 2 of the bracket 1 and into the surface (see Figure 1 and page 1, lines 70-73).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have positioned the mounting apertures of LAH in the laterally extending flanges rather than behind the pivot pin, as taught by Pleiss, to provide the ability to pre-assemble the hand rail with the brackets and secure the assembled unit to the vehicle surface.

Claim 6: As shown in the Figures of LAH, and noted with the explanation "(For TRAVEL POSITION, lift rail and rotate [i.e. pivot] against vehicle wall into secondary recess.)," the hand rail is selectively pivotable between first and second positions.

Claim 7: As shown in the Figures of LAH, there are two brackets provided: an upper bracket and a lower bracket.

Claim 8: As shown in the middle Figure of LAH, the hand rail is assembled to the brackets with a pivot pin extending through each end of the hand rail into a respective bracket.

Claim 9: With the mounting apertures being positioned in the laterally extending flanges of the bracket (as taught by Pleiss and explained above), the mounting apertures are offset from the pivot pin.

Claim 10: As shown in the bottom Figure of LAH, the brackets each include a receiving portion offset toward the left side of the brackets (as shown in that Figure, the handrail is positioned within those receiving portions in the TRAVEL POSITION). With the mounting apertures being positioned in the laterally extending flanges of the bracket (as taught by Pleiss and explained above), the mounting aperture formed through the right side flange would be offset to the opposite side of the receiving portions.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David P. Bryant whose telephone number is (571) 272-4526. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (6:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Vo can be reached on (571) 272-4690. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



David P. Bryant
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3726

dpb
3/21/05